

MEMORIES
OF
OUR HOME

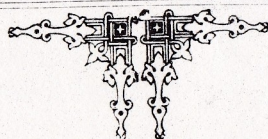


BY H. J. MIES

Aug. 1983.
Presented To Livingston County Historical Society
"Memories of Our Home"
by Henry Joseph Mies.

given by Harold Henry Mies (nephew)
and Henry Harris Mies (great nephew)
R.R.4
Pontiac, Ill.

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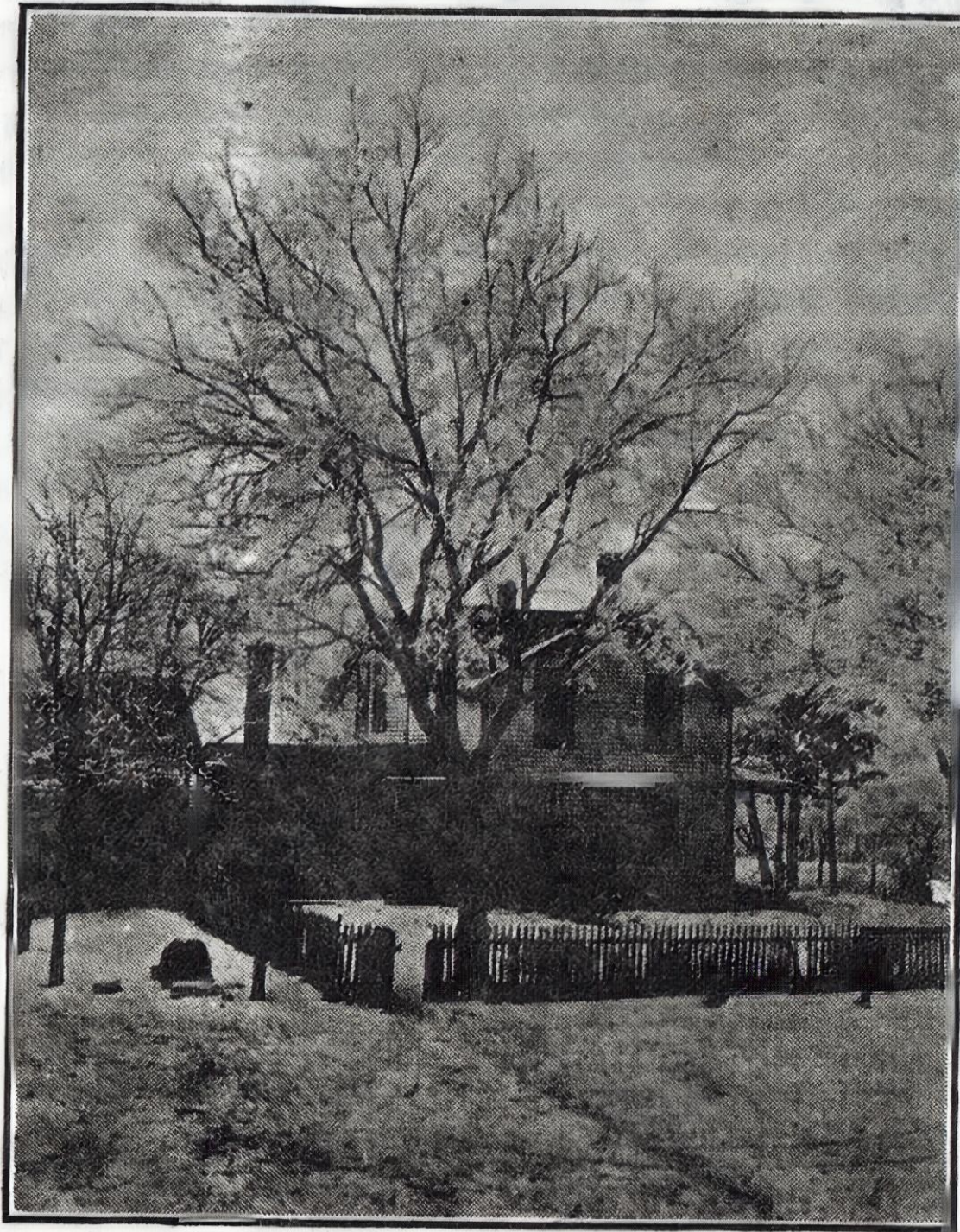
BY H. J. MIES
Re-print — August 1983
Courtesy of H. J. Mies Family

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In presenting the following stories, "The Memories of a Home" I feel that it is a feeble effort on my part and perhaps I have failed to awaken for you our childhood memories and the sacred ties that enshrined our home. In many ways I feel well repaid for the effort I have made. I have tried to weave in them all an undercurrent of love. I have also tried to leave an impress of gratitude to our devoted Parents who always gave strong and willing hands to guide our footsteps. Even tho our home was humble, we now look back with gratitude upon the sacrifices made and cherish the ideals that were fostered there. So appreciative have I been for my existence and my endowments that I have no regrets only in a sense that there has always been a longing for a fuller life. My unfoldment to the complexity of mind has been a constant source of wonderment and that which has come to me thru the objective senses has been interpreted, that we live in a realm of harmonies and that life's deep awakening comes thru a full measure of human love.

H. J. MIES.



The Old Home

Somehow I would like to tell you a story of the Old Home, around which our childhood memories are woven. When I can say, "Once upon a time, when there was a Willie, a Henry, a Johnie" and so on down the line, taking them all in. Tell you all about the trees, the bushes, the buildings, our playthings and pets, how the yards were laid off, the changes that have come and gone, how it all looked when we came back the Centennial year. All was new and strange to us older ones then, so much has happened since that I fear it will be a long, long story. So much to tell of our long summer days of work and play, our winter days with sleds and skates on snow and ice, our school days, the richest perhaps of them all. It can be only a day here and there, a memory now and then.

You and I could weave many a story, and could our imagination have full play in the realm of parental love, what a charm it would lend. Could we go back to our earliest recollections and be again gathered around the kitchen fire on a long winter evening, that would be a beautiful setting, a touching story. Here you and I could see the love of devoted parents, the helpless babe that came so unexpectedly, and shrouded in mystery, see them grow to be rollicking playmates and on thru the different stages of life. All this would be wonderful and the story could go on till the fires burned low. We saw days when shadows were passing and our hearts were saddened, all these experiences of sadness and gladness brought a larger understanding of life. We can now see how devotion and love wrought those wonderous days and left for us a glorious storehouse of golden memories.

There comes to us the first recollection of our Mother's voice and love, the cooing song that must have lingered long as we lay in the land of nod, the pained or glad ex-

pression of her face, the shower of kisses that stopped all aches and pain, the fondling and caressing. All this must have happened to you and me, we saw it daily showered upon others that came. Then the place we had in Father's great heart, never too tired to lay his hand on our head and listen to our story, never too tired to hold us when he came home from his work and sing us to sleep, never too tired to have us bring our A, B, C, book, putting it on his knee and having him tell us over and over again from letter to story, "See the rat; The cat has the rat" or "The sun is up and we are up too, let us go and see the boy that is ill." We all remember how big we were when walking hand in hand with Father. He was always our ideal and idol, always a tower of strength. Would we ever grow up and be like him. You and I have put on his hat, coat and boots, even if it was make believe it was real. We remember the wagons, sleds and other things he would make for us, we remember the long stories he would tell us. When we grew up we would travel like him, on seas, on land, in far away countries. You and I could recall many a memory like this. You and I have had many a longing of what we would do. We watched with the same gladness that they did when the first smile of recognition lighted the face of little baby brother and sister. We well remember the little baby brother that came in endless sleep, and was laid away one October day. So the story could go on and on.

I have in my storehouse memories when Father was in his prime: I remember his curly black locks; I remember plainly Mother too; I remember when Johnie was the last one; the table that we five sat around, then the farm home table that had a bench along the side. The old bench is still around, it was made by Charlie Loo, a man that worked for Father on the U. P. R. R. We remember the old kitchen stove, the little heater, the old washing machine. The washing machine is in the tool house now. How Father would make the suds come when he would turn it, how we would like to splash in it, see the rainbow colors and then see the bubbles vanish, on the face side was reading that described it, and many are the times we

have read it. If my memory is correct there were only seven made or left at the time of the Chicago fire in 1871. I remember the two lamps, the tall one and the small bed room one, our old Singer sewing machine; I have opened it and looked inside, I suppose "just to see the wheels go round." I remember how lonesome we were for years on the farm, having left our friends and relatives when we moved. We remember Grandma coming to see us. We thot her quite rough sometimes, but now I can see it was well for her to hold us little fellows level. We remember too some of our little troubles, how a good cry or a run around the house would adjust matters. I will not tell you about the times when you and I were abused that we could hardly stand it any longer and were going to pack up and leave. I would rather dwell upon your school days, but you have so many recollections of these, that I perhaps could not add much. You remember piloting the new beginner the first few days, the responsibility you felt. I can not begin to remind you of our day dreams or the air castles we built; mine were fragile enough and I have seen many crumble. I sometimes think the dreams of our parents were fully realized as day by day they watched over us, their care and love was not in vain, for now you and I are weaving many fond memories around them. They must have been amused at the many funny sayings, and smiled at the many amusing incidents that occurred. You remember how some of us planted money, eggs and such, how some planted little brother in the garden that he could grow, how we would buy and speculate, how our sister bought a cherry tree from Father and how the ripe cherries kept disappearing. Some bought pigs, calves and colts; how we traded horses by halves, how we owned and claimed every thing; all Father and Mother had was the house and land. Those were great days, great days. We rode the broom for a hobby horse, we built log houses with corn cobs, made corn cob pipes and smoked the corn silk, blew soap bubbles from clay pipes; we imitated every thing; we mimicked every one; we were every animal that ever ran, bird that ever flew; we had inventions too that were great; we made languages and could talk them,

what a story there would be if we would tell of all the experiments that we tried. We played Indian, soldier and cowboy too; it was all real; it all happened. Did you ever see Father or Mother smile at your make believe world? You must still remember how one played doctor, one priest, one lawyer, how the doctors practice was real, how the priest would lay the dead man away, the strange singing we would do. Then how the lawyer would take his part and divide the belongings. I have not told it all, but what did we not do or think about? You remember how us older ones made boxes to hold our belongings, our little trinkets, our school cards. I occasionally find some of those things now and then and old memories are again renewed. In remodeling the old home I found where the bottom of the door casings were almost worn thru, you and I have kicked there many a time trying to get on our boots on a winter morning; again I saw four and five pairs lined up back of the old kitchen stove. You and I remember the cold winters and the deep snow in March, 1881, when cousin Henry left us.

Now I will try and tell you how the old home looked when we came back in '76. The apple trees in the front orchard were almost hid by tall iron weeds and the hedge along the road; the cherry orchard north of the house was almost hid by the border of hedge along the north; the plum orchard east of the cherry orchard was fast growing up into a thicket. There were also rows of plum trees where the garden now is, and south of this were three rows of peach trees along the hedge, and a few quinces east of them. West of the house were the berry patches, the currant and gooseberry bushes and north of them were the grapes. To the east and north was the large apple orchard extending to the hedge east and to the rows of willows on the north. Along this row of willows is where the road led to the field. You also remember the row of cottonwood trees running east from the north of the grove and the ones along the lane to the slough well, where you and I led many a farm horse to water, the two on the other side. You remember the elm and poplar, the evergreens and weeping willow in the yard around the house, the lilac

bush near the well. You have heard Father tell how he dug the well and Mother hoisted up the ground. You remember how we watered the maple trees on the lane to the road to keep them growing. You remember the rose bushes that were planted between the maple trees; you may not remember the two rows of iris or blue flag that was planted between the maples.

I remember the first apples I found in the orchard, a cluster of seven Romannites. There was hardly a tree or building that we did not climb.

When one recalls these past memories it is not strange then that I have named some of the trees, some of the ponds where we found the pond lilies and black bird's nest, some of the hills where we found the fox and wolf dens and the Indian barbs.

There is much that can be woven around our childhood days. You and I remember the old bureau and the small drawers on top; the one on the left is where Father kept his trinkets; we remember the gold pen he brought from Australia, it had a red stone in the top, how I admired it, how we fitted on the old agate ring. You remember the peculiar carving of the knobs on the drawers, and the same style on the head board of the beds, the long looking glass that you and I held baby up to more than once. We remember the willow, spool and tin whistles; the tin ones came with the kerosene chewing gum. You remember the one Johnnie had such a good claim on. We remember the cast runner skates, I express more than a sigh even now that they broke so easily. We remember Mother's old trunk and Father's old suit case. I have looked at the picture on the inside of the cover of the trunk a hundred times or more; it held all her wordly possessions when she left home, and made that trip to Omaha. The little black carved case holding two pictures you so often saw in that little top bureau drawer is the beginning of this story. I can almost remember her wedding dress, and describe it. I do not believe I will ever forget Father's cap and the lining with its variety of colors, nor Mother's neck scarf, which also had a few bright colors near the fringe. She wore it mostly on Sundays, and afterwards

fell to us, nor the fur trimmed mittens, nor the buckles on her belt.

We all remember the games we played, hide and seek, blind man's bluff and such, or the pop-corn we had on evenings, and how it was sometimes ground in the coffee mill. You and I have still a lingering memory of the stolen raisin pie, we remember Mark Twain, knew every picture, remember the picture of the boy carving the pumpkin and the midnight race on the Mississippi. Our story book of Robinson Crusoe, the maps on the wall could tell where Father had been. I think George remembers when he learned the word "world". Our first Christmas tree and how delighted our sister was, the vivid imagination of the younger ones and how they became frightened at objects. You all remember the brown overcoats that were bought with pop-corn money and could not be worn out, also the green one of Father's. You remember the old cow we brought along to the farm and afterwards Becky, the calves and colts, old Jeff and Nell, our dog Shep and then Carlo, hundreds of memories could follow, but I must come to a close.

I know I have not told you all as I started to tell, how it all looked when we came back the Centennial year, 1876. Some of you will remember and others will not, so I will leave you with your memories. You can recall the changes as they came to you. I have lived here so long that most of my associates have left, but almost daily early childhood memories are playing upon me. I almost find myself living them over again. Even the noise of a wagon in the distance, reminds me how we would wait on summer evenings for Father's coming. I sometimes go to the old grove, there I still find a few wild flowers, the rose buds red for beads, the wild aster and the bridal wreath. I am wishing that my children could learn to know them, as I do. I am glad to tell you this story of our childhood happy days (care free from trials). I have tried to weave it around our fond parents who were the central figures. I would like to have you hand it down to your children, that your days and their days may be woven into even a more beautiful setting. I close with regrets, wishing I could have

lived more, had more love, beauty and imagination woven into my soul; life then would have been richer in song and story. I sometimes think that my pre-natal life has given me what I have, feel and know, perhaps that someday will be woven into a story too. Now I am leaving you with your memories, glorious possessions of your childhood's happy days, weave them with other memories around the Old Farm Home.

Our Old Army Revolver

When I was weaving the story, "The memories around the old farm home." I forgot to tell you about the old army revolver, so now I will tell you the part it played in our early boyhood days. This story and the others that I have woven would not perhaps have been told if it had not been for it, but before beginning this story I must tell you how it came into Father's possession. He bought it from a comrade in his company while a soldier in the civil war, and afterwards it was carried by him in those trying days on the plains of the west. Before beginning this story I went to the cabinet where it is now kept, examined it again as I did when I was a boy. It is somewhat rusty but the chamber still shows fine engraving. I could not make out the date exactly but it was made some time in the 50's and an Allen make. The engraving on the chamber shows a timber scene; the etching of the pine trees is fine work, it shows in hiding a prairie grouse, a fawn lying down, a hound chasing a deer, and perhaps others whose outlines are now faded.

It was while examining it that many of the early memories came to me. About the first I recall is how excited we would become when we looked at a picture in Mark Twain where a buffalo had chased a man up a tree and the buffalo was in the act of climbing after him, with clinched hand we would say, "Pa, if I had the old revolver I would shoot him." Many are the times we took it from its leather case, examined it, took off the bone handle, saw the main spring, took off the plate on the side, examined the lock, then the ramrod, pulled the trigger and snapped it, not a working part was missed.

My first recollection of wanting to use it must have been in the fall of '76. The field south of the house was planted to corn: this field is now called "The Flat," and if my memory is correct, a little corn crib stood in the

field just south of the house; here I saw my first rabbit and oh the wishing for the old revolver.

Now I am going to tell you the part it played in this story. The years of my recollection here are so closely woven together that I can not say if it was the same fall or the following one, but it was on one of these fall afternoons that I decided to run away. I was a sturdy little lad and remember the trip as if it were but yesterday, I even wonder now why do I remember the tall weeds with flowers on them that lined the roadside, these must have been the iron weed and the rosin weed. I took the lane leading from the yard past the grove, turning north on the highway, and as I was nearing the cross road I saw two rabbits. In my excitement I hurried home, asking Mother for the old revolver. I forgot my mission, and this story as well as the others perhaps would not have been told if it had not been for the old revolver; it seems a little strange that it should have fallen to me when the treasures of the old home were divided.

In our boyhood days our imagination had full play and now I say, recalling those days, we were mighty men with the old revolver in our boot tops and fought mighty battles.

I recall one incident that came near being an accident. An explosion occurred while brother Frank was pouring melted lead into the bullet mold. The ceiling of the old kitchen was spattered with lead, and on another occasion the same brother had an accident while out hunting. All the chambers exploded at the same time and came near shooting him thru the foot. Perhaps other incidents could be told, but now I wonder at those days; they were closely linked to the civil war. Father told of his days on the western plains, and our days were pioneer days on the prairies. As I am telling you this story I can see ourselves boys again, bold boys commanding armies, causing wild animals to cringe in their dens, days when you and I carried Father's old army revolver.

The Story of Three Little Boys in Blue

I must tell this story to you, "The story of three little boys in blue." I saw a faded family photo at one of our family gatherings and again from my store house of memories I was recalling our boyhood's happy days. I did not know then, but I surely know now, that our parents must have been proud and happy to see three healthy, sturdy boys in their new suits of blue. I remember now it was a color my Mother always liked, and then it was closely woven to those civil war days. Father had been a soldier and worn that color for over three years and the faded photo I saw was not taken long afterwards. I can remember now, and plainly recall those days of fitting and cutting. How eager we were. How she busied herself in making them. They were all hand sewed. I do not remember now if suits like those could have been bought, but if they could they would have been too high. I was a boy of 14 or over before I wore a ready-made suit.

I well remember those glad eventful days. I still almost feel that something, that feeling of childhood's thrill and gladness when they took us to have our picture taken. As I remember it now the pictures were taken at Story's gallery. We were taken up a flight of stairs to the second floor. In this room we were lined up, the oldest first, myself second and Johnnie third. Frankie was also in line, but the story is woven around us three. When there was a Willie, a Johnnie and a Henry. It is no wonder the picture has faded, for our shadows have lengthened since then and our memories are beginning to be tinged a little with brown and gold. These three little boys are now grown up men and are telling a long, long story to their own children of three little boys in blue. I can remember those days of patient waiting and how anxious we were, asking many times. "When will they ever be finished." We were old enough to grasp that the picture taking ma-

chine was something strange and wonderful. It now means a great deal to me to see the wonderful unfoldment of a child. What must it have meant to our parents to see their eager boys, so full of expectancy and excited as they were lined up in a row. Told to stand up straight, look pleasant and watch for the birdie. Then the shock that came to us when we heard nothing but the click and were told that the picture was taken.

The pictures came at last, but some how I can not remember those days. Father also waited patiently for them. They had been taken so he could take some along to the old country to show to his parents. I can not remember the day he left, but well remember the day he came home. Mother had told us to watch the trains, as she had a letter telling he would be home soon. We had watched for days and days. At last he came. To us he had been gone a long, long time. I remember the unpacking of the suit case. He had package after package of garden seeds. I well remember the colored and spotted beans, but the bright red stockings were the most admired and prized of all the trinkets. Grandma had knitted them. They were ribbed from ankle up and all three pair alike. I am supposing now that grandma wove in her memories too, but that would be another story. I remember about the last time I wore mine. It was a few years afterwards, after we had moved to the country. Here the occasion for wearing them was not so often. We were fast out growing them and were beginning to hand them down, so it may have been my brother's pair instead of mine. It was at our district school that I wore mine and the little suit of blue. It was the last day and I had learned and spoke a soldier piece. I was only able to learn two verses. It was "Oh Would I Were a Soldier Cried Little Herbert Lee." I can recall those two verses today. I remember the clapping. I can picture myself as a proud little soldier boy.

I smile now in recalling those suits, they were cut from the same pattern. The picture shows that Willie's was too short, Johnnie's was too long, while mine was about right in length. I remember the four buttons near the bottom on the legs. I gladly recall all this. The little

suits meant so much to us. The gladness it gave Mother in the making and us in the wearing makes this good world real and the story true. If I have made you feel as I have felt, as I again lived the little boy in blue, then I have played my part. On the back of the photos you will find this printed: "Taken by Story, Mendota, Ill." All that I have added was the year, 1875.

The Story of Old Wine Sap

"Old Wine Sap are you going too?" These are the words I spoke one summer evening in June, 1913. I had gone to the orchard for the family driving horse and came across old wine sap and saw that the old apple tree was nearly dead. It was the only one left of either two or three that Father planted in 1869. It has been so long ago that I can hardly remember how many there were, but two I can distinctly remember. As the summers came and went wine sap grew strong and sturdy and learned to know the children of the old farm home that played around him. The bright red apples ripened sometime in June, and this is where wine sap played his part and tells this story.

On a July day, 1877, there came trooping to wine sap the farm home children he knew so well. They were soon in the tree top shaking down the bright red apples, not with a great willingness, for they had been sent there and it seemed to them that the two heaping pails of apples were rather a generous gift for a baby brother. Wine Sap heard what the children said and all that took place that day, but could not quite understand, neither could the children, but they knew that something unusual had taken place that day. They stood in wonderment as Father took the neighbor lady home in the old farm wagon and with her two heaping milk pails full of apples. The baby brother has heard the story many, many times, only a great deal longer. Others have been added since. Wine Sap has learned to know them all, and has seen the changes that have taken place.

I tasted wine sap's bright red offerings this year for the last time and the memories cluster around me thick and fast. I fittingly spoke to old wine sap from memories store. "Old Wins Sap are you going too?" The ones that gave the baby brother have long been journeyed home. The children that played in wine sap's shade are scattered.

They are telling the story at their own fire sides of the part the old apple tree played at the farm home. The writer is the only one left and he will clear the spot where wine sap stood and plant again. He closes as he opened the story and fittingly speaks, "Old Wine Sap are you going too?"

Little Round Top

The hill called Little Round Top, back of our orchard, has gone thru many changes till it reached its permanent place as pasture land. It is here the cattle and horses graze and in winter days wind by trail in single file over the hill to fields beyond. It is not very high and has sharp slopes to the north, east and south while towards the west it slopes off level. In this direction the orchard and farm home grounds are laid off bordering the highway leading to the district school and village. Round Top would have made an ideal building spot, and such were the dreams of its owner had it been bordering the highway. It gave a splendid open view of the land scape around, especially to the south. One could see the many farm homes near and far surrounded by clusters of trees; the district school stood out bare; the trading village could plainly be seen with its many house tops; further on the Vermillion river with its fringe of timber. This outline of higher land in the distance in our early day seemed to limil space, for here is where earth and sky met, but now in more mature years I have gone there to watch the sun set, and on many a clear day I have been filled with gladness as stretched out before me were great green fields as far as the eye could reach. Many a sun rise have I seen, many a colored cloud has lent its charm to me as I have been calling the cattle and horses home. We never tired of the story told by Father, how, in an early day when it was virgin soil

he had bought this small farm, and this hill is the one he stood on and surveyed the sloping fields before him. Over it then was a wagon trail that led to the far away markets and coal mines. It was laid off into permanent fields and the old trail, fox and wolf dens gave away to fields of grain. Here as a boy to save the fields of grain I have scared away the geese and ducks that were migrating in the spring time. The field was divided by a hedge fence and along one side a road led to the fields. Often have I trudged along the wagon side that was filled with corn we had gathered as old Jeff and Nell were climbing the hill. Now the road and hedge fence are gone, only a few hedge trees remaining and they too soon will pass away. Here were the little fields Father gave us. Here the yield from pop-corn bought our winter coats and clothing and proud we were of our earnings. Here was our potato patch. Here I saw my first quail that fluttered from its nest and I followed, thinking it was injured. Here one day while playing I lost the main spring from the old Seth Thomas clock. Some day perhaps I'll tell the story of our old Seth Thomas clock, but now I am weaving the story of Little Round Top.

Often have I raced down the slopes to the foot of the hill to where the ponds were and where the lilies and rushes grew. In the rushes is where the black birds had their nest. How I longed for the pretty red feathers they had in their wings. How I wondered what was down deep in the hill. I had heard Father tell about digging down in the hill for sand. Here near the orchard side we planted our butter-nut trees. Here we pulled the iron weed. Here we broke the rosin weed for chewing gum. Here we picked up the arrow points that the plow exposed. Here we saw the cray-fish holes and the colored clay marbles. Here we saw where little rivulets, capes, bays, islands and such were formed by the beating rains. These memories are awakening many others and I fear I must close. It will soon be sun set on Little Round Top.

The Story of Old Hobble Tree

Old Hobble Tree, our old black charger, was a minkler apple tree that stood in the corner of the orchard bordering the highway, also near the drive way that led to the farm yard. It was here the children played on summer days riding this minkler apple tree. Here they straddled the low branches and made believe they were a Sherman, a Sheridan, a Logan, Grant and Lee. There was one limb that grew almost straight. It was strong and sturdy and very low and could be easily reached. On this limb we took our turns and many times rode to Winchester twenty miles away. We made the long weary march with Napoleon to Moscow. We rallied the troops at Waterloo. We imitated every general from Washington on down. Our great delight was to be a cowboy on the plains. How we would pat the old black charger that had taken us to Winchester a hundred times or more and always just in time. The memories of long ago make me smile when I think of the sturdy boys having a hard time to leap the old apple tree when they heard the distant thunder. I can see them leaning forward peering thru the branches guiding the old black charger to Winchester twenty miles away, to rally the soldiers and save the day. Our Father was a soldier and from him heard the stories of the civil war and even in our school days we formed in line and marched as soldiers carrying a stick for a gun. I even go out there now to the old minkler tree and pat the spot where we would sit and play, saying, do you remember when you carried a Sherman, a Sheridan, a Logan, Grant and Lee? Here we surveyed the troops. Here we saw the rush of cavalry horses. Here we heard the clash of musketry and the roar of artillery, saw and felt all that took place on a battle field. This year the old apple tree was loaded with fruit and as I was gathering them I stood on the place where we would sit and play. It took me back to my

younger days when we rode to Winchester twenty miles away, rallied the soldiers and saved the day. It is fifty years now since the civil war, but I am often carried back to the Minkler apple tree where we imitated a Sherman, a Sheridan, a Logan, Grant and Lee. Now I will close the memories of my childhood happy days saying:

I would like to see my children play,
Imitating the heroes of their day,
I would like to see them ride old hobble tree
Over hill and plain to distant land and sea,
I would love to tell them of my boyhood happy days
How I rode old hobble tree to Winchester twenty miles away.

The Noon-Day Elm

It stood in the front yard of the old homestead, planted there while quite small by our Father. Planted in 1869. It now, on this June day, 1910, stands a majestice tree and one can hardly encircle its trunk with his arms. It stands close to a picket fence in the northeast corner of the home yard, also near a sidewalk. The walk laid with large square brick leads to the barn. It throws its shade over the picket fence, and it is here at noon time that the tired farm horses are unhitched. It has the traits and characteristics of its forest kind, even as it stands out on the open prairie, where it shares and beautifies a farm home. Near the base the roots stand out like great cords tapering off in the ground. This I have often admired as it gives it the character of strength and old primitive traits. I will soon know it for a half a century, and many, many times have been the nights that I have laid my hand on its sturdy trunk, looking at the starry heavens. Here we have the open view to the north, and have often gazed at the north star and the dipper, and at rare times the northern lights. I have often seen it changing to a deep green when a rain storm or dark cloud hung in the back ground. It seemed to me like a sentinel guarding the old farm home. I have seen the light summer breezes rustle the outer leaves. I have seen it swaying in the storm. I have seen it covered with heavy ice glistening in the sun. I have seen the old scars heal where limbs had been torn away. I remember one large scar that was many years in healing and the sap running down colored the bark. I have often seen it glisten in the morning sun as it was laden with the frost of night. I well remember the old carpenter bench that stood near it. It holds many, many memories and now I look upon it in a mediative way. I feel that it has been closely associated with me. We have seen many summers and winters. It has seen the changes of a home. It has seen the chil-

dren playing under its spreading branches and climbing its trunk. It has seen the old folks pass away, taken on their last journey home. I often think and say, "You have guarded well the memories of a home," and it was on a beautiful day in June, 1910, that I christened it the Noonday Elm.

Play Days in and around the old Crib

In weaving the story of the old breaking plow I said that perhaps others would follow, so many memories were stirred in weaving that story, so many of our play-days and play-things were recalled woven in and around that old crib that it would make a long, long story. I can-not forget the most prized play-thing, our clicking machine. It afforded us a world of past-time and amusement and perhaps a quarrel now and then as we would become anxious, wishing our turn would come some-time to run it. It was an old discarded tally box or measuring box from a threshing machine. It would register the baskets or bushels of grain threshed. It, like the old plow, had been stored away in the upper part of the crib and found about the same time. It did not take us long to find out that the projecting finger could be moved and that in its release there would be a click and snap and the figures on the dial would move. We made it move some and perhaps raced it at that for when one got tired the o'her boy was ready and anxious. Here is where some of our quarrels came in.

I remember some of the numbers on the dial were quite dim. They were raised and the red and white paint was almost gone, the manipulating of the finger and to see the wheels go round was fun, it also remained a mystery. How did it look inside, and what was it used for? We tried every scheme we could think of, closing our eyes and keeping count while we pulled the trigger to see if the dial would correspond with our count and such. I think now had it been oiled it would have perhaps continued its clicking longer. It no doubt had struck off many threshed bushels before it was stored away and the use it had in our day had it been real would have made some poor threshing-man

glad, constant use and the wanting to know how it looked inside made it one day give out. It could not be everlasting, the click and snap gave out something like the waterbury watch when the spring and tick gave out, one could not expect to get the nine feet of spring back again.

The worn out clicking machine was made use of in other ways. Its clicking days were over but the other role it played was that of a noise machine and it truly could produce some sound. The larger wheel was the most prized for it could produce the biggest noise. It was placed between two laths near the end with a small nail thru the center hole of the wheel so that it would revolve, then on top of the lath and reaching down over the wheel a little was bound a heavy corset steel so that in pushing the wheel forward over the ground it would make a clicking noise, almost our first experiment brought results and we went wild with hand clapping.

The old crib was our store house and play-house and many a moment was whiled away there. It was quite aways from the house, giving us a good excuse to say to Mother we did not hear you call. I recall at this writing of having fallen twice from the upper floor thru the man-hole about 10 feet. I was just a little shaver, my first fall. I can see myself and hear Father's consoling words as he took my little hand in his and led me to the house. My older brother was on the other side and how he praised me saying I should not cry. These soothing words were of great comfort. The other fall was thru the same man-hole and happened one day while shelling corn. I was quite a bit older but the fall almost stunned me but as no one saw me I soon jumped to my feet and never said a word to anyone about it at the time.

One of the other great events that occurred was the time I caught my first rabbit. A hero of a hundred battle fields could not have stepped higher than I did. The deep laid plans in this event makes me smile in recalling it. In the twinkle of an eye a little boy became a man, how I longed to tell Father when he came home, that was almost the most important part. He would marvel at his boy that felt he was a man. How I pictured out his words of praise. Father had

been called away from home and the responsibility of taking care of the stock fell to us little boys. It was this same morning that Mother came down to help us as something had gone wrong for some reason the cattle were around the crib. I remember one old cow tried to hook the crib, got one horn behind a board, seemed to me that she was trying to tear it off. I jumped back in amazement not knowing what other stunts might follow. This happened before I caught my rabbit. Had it occurred after this my pride of being a hero might not have held out.

When the corn was out we used the north part for our swing room and would mark the time on the floor where the sun shone thru the cracks, using little sticks to mark the sun shadow. Many an hour was spent here after school, first getting our lunch Mother had for us. This is the same crib that gave you the story "My Old Canoe." Here we played hide and seek, here we had a good view to Sacred Center. It was only the other morning that many old memories were stirred. I was walking across the old pond which is now drained for many years. I stopped to survey the ancient shore line that is still quite distinct and abrupt. I thot of the waves that had beaten against it on wind days. I have seen it lined with thousands of little fishes that perished in the winter. Fleeting years almost half a century filled with memories are crowding upon me. That same morning I went a little out of my way to see the lone cotton wood in the hog lot. It will soon go as it is in its declining years and perhaps in some summer's storm will go down. It is the only one left of the many that Father planted around the farm yard. On the north side is a decayed spot and from the tracks I saw in the snow I knew that a bunny rabbit was inside and safe and I was glad. Going on a little farther I came to a little rise of ground. From this view point I looked back to the lone cotton-wood and then thot of the old board fence that enclosed the hog lot to Sacred Center. It was along this fence that brother and I planted our acorns. We got the acorns in the Five Mile timber. We would only go there on rare occasions, such as on the 4th of July. I have said a hundred times why didn't Father buy land with timber on it. We were told in school that acorns would

grow and become mighty trees. I have a little oak in the front yard of the old home that now bears acorns and my little children are making cups and saucers of them as I once did. I call it my Washington Oak. Along the road side was a row of willows. These are all gone except one lone tree near Sacred Center. Between the row of willows and the road or highway we had a little field of flax. Father gave us this ground and the money was ours. It was all pulled by hand. From the same raise of ground I looked to the little knoll where the cattle corall was, here the cattle were locked for the night as they came from the Dale ranch. This is long forgotten. It was on the little knoll just north of snake-hole and the lone cotton-wood. It was at this pond that brother and I would go snake hunting. The brother that planted the acorns and helped with the flax, the one that led me to the house when I fell out of the crib.

I fear I must come to a close. Other stories could follow. I am glad to have recalled these. I have been back again in the reign of my boyhoods happy days. I have tried to have you with me in my play days in and around the old crib.

Our old Breaking Plow

My early memories of events cluster close around the centennial year, for that is the year we came back to the farm. It must have been late in the fall of that year that I came across the old breaking plow. It had been used in turning the virgin sod of the old homestead and had been stored away in the upper story of the old crib. I found it in the west end, where the oats bin was and the beam was between the rafters and the joist plate. Here it was safe, just a little beyond our reach. It was also a little too heavy for me to handle, but nevertheless I have gone there time and time again for when I first saw it and had gone over it carefully I had desire to get one of the long iron rods that acted as a guide in turning over the furrow and sod. I think there were five of these guide rods. They were securely fastened to the upper part of the cutting share, then making the long sweep back, acting as a mouldboard. Not far from the end a short brace rod was fastened to these at right angles and held them in place. It was this form and outline that stirred my early imagination for to me it resembled an Indian tomahawk. In writing this I am reminded of the many trips I made up there, working patiently to get a rod from its fastening. I never succeeded, but if I had it would have added greatly to my Indian and early frontier life.

Years came and went and other imaginations and fancies followed and ran their course. In the same crib were found other playthings, but these will follow in other stories. The old breaking plow found its way at last to the iron pile and in this I had a hand. The handles and wood beam were saved and were in time used on other plows, but I never could forget those early days tho I now was older but thinking silently of my heart's desire for a tomahawk which now had but the semblance of long iron rods. Years later while plowing in the spring for oats I did find a real tomahawk, but that would be another long story. Even while in this mood of recalling days of the old breaking plow, events and boyhood days are coming thick and

fast. Coming back to the farm had been the one sole topic and in childish ways had been dreamed of over and over again. Events that had transpired before this were of minor importance. The big free world, the open space, the wild prairie life seemed to come to me in glad and gleeful moments, so much so that I am a free roving prairie boy again, picking the strawberry and the prairie flower. Could I only have experienced camp life in those days my life would have been complete and my stories longer. I can almost feel the enchanting spell and the response to nature that was woven around me in those wondrous days, I lived, enriched my storehouse and could I have had some guiding hand, someone to have lived with me in those imaginative days, memories would have flowed in fuller song and story.

We were always out with Father, would try and help him plow as he turned over the virgin sod that was left. Great long strips of sod would remain unbroken from end to end. Now we would press them down flat. What a world of new sights we would see, what a world of knowledge came to our young minds. Besides this I saw the beauty of each season's change. In the spring time I saw a world of spring flowers and green hillsides, in the fall time the faded prairie grasses tinged with blending of color of the brown and gold. How I followed barefooted in the smooth cut furrow, how we treasured the different forms of snail shells found in the pond holes, how we found bugs and walled them in, we found worms and crawfish, dens of small animals, how we marveled at their storehouse rooms and different appartments, how could the tiny mice hold on so fast when the mother mouse would try and make her escape after the plow had destroyed her home. Here we found stones and little pebbles, bones of dead animals, jointed roots of the blue stem, flowers, little bulbs we would sample, how could the plow cut the big flag and compass plant roots, they seemed to us giants. Out of the stripped weeds we would make canes and whips, and out of the tumble weed we would make dens and houses. I might go on and tell you of a world of memories nestling for me back in the days of the old breaking plow. Even as a man now I long for that old prairie plow. I long for

a little of the wild prairie land. I think our old grove has in it some of the virgin sod for here I find some of the wild prairie flowers. I find my Indian chief (prairie pointer), my wild rose, my wild aster, my bridal wreath, my mullen stalk and a few others. This little bit of virgin sod I will keep for them. Here they are to reign in splendor undefiled. I know that while following in the furrow a bronzed barefooted boy in the summer of the long ago I saw an innumerable host of their sun-kissed kin bid those wild free days adieu. Perhaps a flower was plucked here and there, saved from the plow and hoof, brightening the plow boys life in the dim candle lighted shack. His song and story comes back to me. The plow boy, also the cow boy, how they longed for a light to guide and welcome them and little children to open the cabin door. What strange and what beautiful impresses were woven in those summer days of that long ago that now make those memories golden. Gladness must have reigned, and the morning of life must have been bright to now bring out these beautiful evening shades. Those were fruitful days even in the reign of the old breaking plow.

A Golden Memory

The story could go on and on, but this is a story too, golden, for it is written in the Autumn days. The scenes around the old home are changing. One by one I saw the little ones added and take their place in the circle around the kitchen stove, one by one I saw them move up nearer to Father on the little bench at the family table, then one by one go forth to kindle fires in their own hearth-stones. Now there comes a time to the writer when he books these memories and looks over a lapse of nearly half a century that has filled for him a store-house of golden memories.

All the dreams of coming back to the farm the Centennial year have more than been fulfilled. There is a feeling of gratefulness that a full and useful life has been spent. There has been a just reward and compensation for toil, and now with Mother and the little ones I am leaving the old farm home with the fires burning low. Other glad days are waiting us in our new home in town, but the memories of those days of the long ago I will always cherish and the stories that I have written I gladly give to you. Hand them down to your children.

You and I look back upon childhood's scenes and family settings that have justly changed. It is a fulfillment of plans designed for much good and glory. Now it is the coming in from the harvest fields, the grain has been garnered. I have played my part, my boyhood days, my youth, my manhood, the summer days of long ago, will blend the coming days into beautiful shades and settings.

I am longing for the coming days to play my part in the making of rich and golden memories for my little ones that are now clambering on my knees. They have just had a trip to the old mill and the candy shop on old Dobin. I hope a greater fulness and unfoldment will come to them. I shall tell them of the many walks Mother and I took to Round-Top and View-Point, Tom-Quartz, the cat, and Ike, the dog, following, how we surveyed the fields of waving grain and watched the play of sunlight and shadows, watched and waited for the evening glow. Sometime we will come out to view sun rise from Little Round Top and dream our young

dreams over again. I will tell them of Echo Glen, how Daddy, the little boy in blue, while getting the cows, would linger just a little while at the foot of Round-Top and send out his challenge to an imaginary foe to hear the echo reverberate from the wooded orchard side. I shall show them the few remaining tufts of wild prairie grass that blend the brown and gold in Autumn days. I shall tell them about the wild prairie flowers. I want to show them the ponds with their rushes, the lilies and cat-tails and the red winged black bird that is so scarce now. I saw one this summer and in a moment boyhood days went fleeting by. There were the cat-tails we used to braid and take to school to fight the battles of the North and South. These were fought with as much bravery as in the Civil war days. Here I saw the border of rushes, the glassy center and the sloping ground was one mass of blooming prairie roses. It was a treasured gem near a river's bank. I will tell them of Old Indian Hill, where the Indians had their camping grounds, tell them of the many arrow points and battle axes found, the fluted arrow found on Churches Hill. This little hill Father once donated for a church site. I will tell them how we found the banner stone on Johnson Hill, I will tell them of the table rock on the Eighty, I will tell them of the old Indian trails and camping grounds, of the wagon roads that led to the far away markets, I will tell them of the fox, the wolf and the muskrat dens, I will tell them of the springs on the hill sides, I will tell them of the sunrise greeting that came from the lonely shack of the herder and plow boy, I will tell them of the deep solitude that fell at night over these wide, wide prairies. I will tell them of the little log cabin that Daddy was born in and the emigrant wagon that come over these rolling prairies in golden October days with Daddy as a babe nestling in Mother's arms.

As I am writing this my little girl is begging me for a story and as I finished reading 'Our First Christmas Tree,' she said "me not know Daddy wrote it," and added in a droll manner "Daddy g-o-o-d man." So other heart strings are touched, other hearts are made glad and other memories will be made golden. I have called this a golden memory for it has been made golden thru the fruitage of years. It has been a great

privilege to have lived, blending the old and the new,
my boyhood, my youth, my manhood with color and
charm.

The hope that lay in my boyhood days was like
the sunbeams dancing light,
The love that was born in my early morn made my
dream land dazzling bright,
Now memories of old like sunbeams of gold are
streaming thru the canopy's blue,
So I might go on and on for the story has no end.

Our First Christmas Tree

In weaving my stories, "Memories of Our Home," I must tell you of a Christmas morn and a Christmas day in that long ago. The family circle had been completed and our sister was getting at an age when there came a longing for this, and it was her pleadings to Father and Mother that gave us our tree. Now, as I am telling you this story it again brings back to me those golden memories. It had always been our custom to put the gifts on the plates at the breakfast table. The older ones had already unraveled the mysteries pertaining to Christmas time and were playing their part in giving this information to the younger ones. Many were the times little sister would go to Mother and get the assurance that there would really be a Christmas tree.

Our little world was fast getting larger and custom, too, was changing, but as Christmas was drawing nearer we were all eager to take a part and make the occasion a glad one. I remember well sawing a long slender branch from an evergreen that stood in the front yard near the elm "Little Sheridan." I remember the heavy tumbling rod knuckle that was used as weight at the bottom, then the short braces that held the tree in place. This work was all done in the old kitchen after the little ones were all snug in bed and all was as still as a mouse. Along near midnight the tree was taken to the living room where the children had been told it would be placed.

It was in this room that little sister had begged from Mother the privilege of sleeping, eager to learn

more of the Santa Claus story and thinking that she might see his tiny reindeer. In this room the folding couch was opened and here sister and a little neighbor girl slept. She as well as our sister had never seen a Christmas trees. As I look back now the decoration was indeed simple, no glittering tinsel, no shining stars or little bells. We had strung pop-corn, Mother had bought little colored candels and there was cotton batton placed in the branches to give it the effect of snow. Colored paper streamers were also used and then came the gifts that were hung here and there with names attached—handkerchiefs, neckties, slippers, a little brass watch, a pocket knife, a top that wound with a spring, a jumping jack, some story books, two little rocking chairs, the highest prized of all, one for little sister and one for the neighbor girl. Really the tree was a vision even beyond our expectation and to those who could not understand remained to them an astounding mystery.

We were all eager in the morning to see how the sleeping children would take it. Many was the peep into the room just to see how it really did look in the dim lamp light. It was Mother's privilege to give it the last finishing touches, lighting the little candles and waking the sleeping children. When she came back she told us all was ready, then tip-toed softly into the room again, woke the little girls saying, "Come, wake up, Santa Claus has really brought us a Christmas tree." Those of us that were in the room now saw a golden moment when little hearts were too full for utterance. "Mother is it really true? A Christmas tree, and when did Santa Claus bring it?" It was a moment or so before they could make themselves believe that the vision before them was really a Christmas tree. Then the gleeful moments and hand clapping that followed made that morning hour a fairy land and her day dreams true. In another moment she was in Father's sleeping room saying to him, "Papa, Papa, come and see our Christmas tree." Then the hurried description as what to really expect, telling him of the little candles, then running ahead to make sure it was really still there, seeming too wonderful and beautiful to stay or be true.

Sister has told the story to me many times and I have told it to her as I am telling it now. To her it stands out as one of the most joyful moments of her life.

The little rocking chair she still has. Days and years have come and gone, other memories have been added, other hearts have been made glad; her little girls call it Mamma's rocking chair, got on a Christmas tree when she was a little girl, in the long ago.

The children that were gathered around that Christmas tree have all told the story to their children, the givers of those little gifts have long journeyed home, the little slender pine that gave the Christmas tree is no more, "Little Sheridan" robbed it of the sunshine and summer rain. Now I have ended my story of a Christmas morn and a Christmas day at the old farm home.

Old Indian Hill or Signal Hill

Old Indian Hill or Signal Hill has perhaps more of a history than I can even begin to tell about, for there is not even a word left or a story told of what happened there in an early day. The reason of my telling this story is because at one time it was peopled by Indians, also because of its peculiar setting in our Illinois rolling prairie.

I have been on it many times in doing my farm work, and even at other times while passing over it I have stopped to admire the landscape around it. This year in the fall time I have been more than ever impressed with its peculiar setting and I gave it the name of "Old Indian Hill." In an early day, in the spring time, the summer time and even in the winter time, it lent a peculiar strangeness and fascination as one would stand and drink in the surroundings. At every turn there would be new changes. The view in the distance was open and one could admire the far away landscape. There was only one connecting hill, aside from this the slopes were gentle, then the open level prairie with its coloring of grasses and at the foot and surrounding it were many ponds and sloughs. At the south foot was South Hole, on the southwest were Two Dots, named after their peculiar smallness, also they were very close together. To the west came Deep Hole. To the northwest and north came Two Long Holes. To the east came Half Moon, this one Father named because of its crescent shape. To the southeast came High Pond. These ponds, with their tall rushes and different colored grasses, made a beautiful setting as they lay nestling in the open prairie, while in the center there was reflected the glassy waters they held.

At my writing of this story all this has been changed. These are only memories of the past. I have herded cattle here. I have seen the wild ducks and geese come and go. I have seen the ponds with their tall rushes and cat-tails

go down to ashes as the fall fires would sweep them. It was a great sight for us boys as Father would take us out after supper to clear the ponds of their rank growth. How we would watch him plow and make ditches to drain them. How we would follow the ditches from one pond to another, wading in them bare footed, finding the ripples and deep holes. How we would name them after great falls or great rapids. How the ditches were named after great rivers. How we lingered in the sand and gravel bars. How we wondered at the steep bluffs and mapped the water's course from one ditch to another, then the streams and larger rivers, and finally to the gulf.

I have seen many changes and in later years have helped make some. It almost seems like a romance to look back when all this was in its primitive and pristine state. Perhaps this is why I am weaving in so much that surrounds Old Indian Hill. Deep hole to the west is where we boys planned to have our swimming hole. Here is where Father planted walnuts along the west side, but in the changes that came later they gave away, and also the slough was drained with tile and today is raising golden grain. I can not forget North Hole. Here is where my brother and I found a prairie chicken's nest and in our daily visits she became so tame that we could touch it in its nest. Here we saw the small cotton wood trees come up and often wondered at the growth they made in a season. How we longed to see them grow up into mighty trees, but in the cultivation of the soil they gave away. Here along the border of North Hole Father planted water melons. How well we remember the place, away back in the dense growth of corn. How good the ground cherries tasted to us that we would find while helping Father gather corn. How we tried to help cut cockle burs in the fall. He gave us hatchets from the old tool chest. Tools that had been used by him when he worked on the Union Pacific R. R. I well remember the six or seven acre timothy field at the north foot of the hill. Here is where the wolves had their dens. How we were paid before and after school hours for pulling iron weeds or mustard out of the oats and flax. This would mean our spending money for Fourth of July.

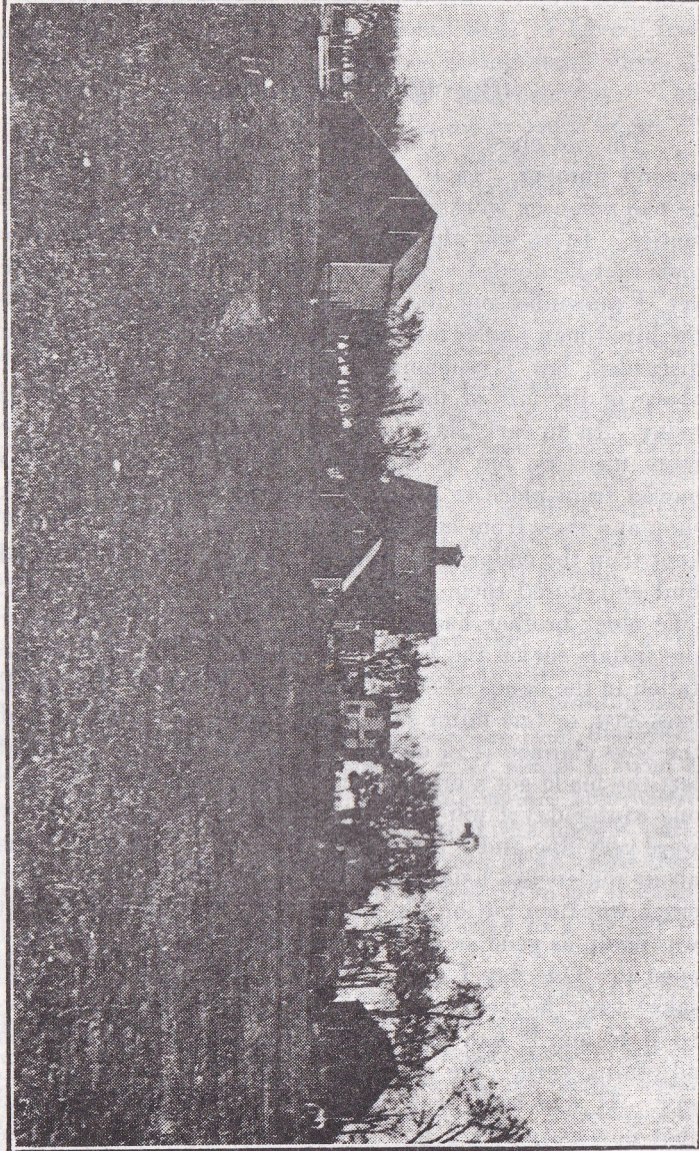
How glad I was when I found some paper money in cap box. The cap box once had in it percussion caps such as were used on the Springfield rifles of the civil war.

I fear I must close for in the recalling of memories I will forget why I named the hill. I named it Old Indian Hill because on it more arrows are found than on any other spot of the farm. Then I called it Signal Hill, for on it signal fires could be built and sent a long distance. Now the story is closed. I have named the hill. The changes have come and gone. I have gladly recalled the golden memories of my boyhood happy days to keep me from getting old and to make the old new.

Our Old Walnut Tree Called Centennial

A walnut seed was planted in the long ago, and as the years came and went it was called Centennial. Father planted the seed in the fall of the Centennial year, 1876. The year we came back to the farm. I remember as if it were but yesterday, and how full of eagerness I watched the planting. The nuts were taken from our store house, the little loft above the kitchen. They were planted along the east side of the grove along the road. Father told how the freezing would crack them and how a tiny sprout would come up in the spring time. All of this seemed so strange and wonderful and many a visit was made the next spring, many were the disappointments. At last a few sprouts came up, these Father planted in the yard around the farm home. I well remember the old spade he used and I watched it all. He first dug the hole and then transplanted the tree. Old Centennial was better known than the others as it could be seen every day from the kitchen window. It stood a little east and south of the farm home. Many a washing was done in its shade, many a nut was cracked here in the fall time. It was a stately tree, having a nice straight trunk, the limbs branching out about ten feet from the ground. Centennial seemed to need more care than the others, when very small our house cat nearly ruined it by clawing and tearing the bark. I remember how carefully Father wrapped it, taking part of an old buffal o robe (a robe he had brought with him from the west), this remained around it for a long time and it finally recovered. For many years it was the pride of the farm home and its shade almost reached the kitchen porch. In the June storm of this year it was blown down. It had been weakened at the base by a decayed spot. I cleared the spot and stored away the wood, recalling many of the incidents when both of us were young. I admired the beautiful coloring of the deep plain grain of the wood. I tried to count the rings and

find its age. I was told by Father how it would grow and bear nuts. I well remember all this. I saw it a tiny sprout, then a mighty tree, I saw it leaf in the spring time, then blossom. Saw it swaying in the storm, heard the crash of the fallen monarch. Around it all was stored a world of memories and love. Rich are the memories of that long ago, those that are woven around that old walnut tree. Some day perhaps little keep sakes will be made from the wood that I have stored away. Then when memories linger around, fond memories, a more beautiful story can be woven around Old Centennial, a tree that was planted in the long ago.



Our Old Tool Chest

The old chest! The times we explored it are almost beyond number. In it were our Father's tools, the tools he had when he worked on the Union Pacific R. R. in the sixties. In it was the small box that held just the few tools that he needed. The little box is around some where yet, I remember one day seeing it on the iron pile where the hired man had thrown it. It was broken and had been discarded, but I remember picking it up and putting it above in the loft of the work shop, where it no doubt is today. In an early day the old chest had a place in a store room upstairs, but as the family kept increasing it was moved from place to place. It was finally put in a work shop and then from building to building. In later years I kept it in the cellar, gathered all the tools together I could find and stored them away. Some had been given away. The older brother had the old ax. Well do I remember the initials cut on the back of the head, J. M. It now has fallen in the hands of one of the other brothers. The small back saw, or fine miter saw, is also gone. I suppose all of the boys claimed it in our day. We had all used it and at last the blade got a crack in it. I remember well the time one winter day I put teeth on the top of the blade. They were very fine and I was a long time at it. The blade was about ten inches long and about three inches wide. The crack was then put on top and between the iron clamp. It was again as good as new. Many is the time I have sharpened it. One day I gave it to my brother (just as a keep sake) when he went to California. Not long ago he showed it to me, it had been lost and he had found it in an adjoining yard. He asked me if that was the old U. P. saw. It was badly rust eaten now. I looked at it and thot how patiently I must have worked putting on those fine teeth. I felt like bringing it home and putting it back in the chest with the others. Perhaps there is a yearning

and a longing for one another. Who knows. I don't.

The old chest is in the summer kitchen now and in it are as many of the old tools as I could find. I have a few in the work shop now, I remember seeing some there, a bevel square and some large augers just yesterday. The square was our big pocket knife, the blade could be set at different angles and each one of us claimed this as our knife. I even wondered yesterday as I handled it and laid it up, so as to bring it back, why we had not sharpened the blade when we were boys so it would cut. I do not think our Father knew how strong our desires were. Even now I look back in astonishment at the things we did and wanted to do. It seems as if but yesterday when my brother and I took the rasp to level down the grindstone. The rasp did wonderful work and we were looking at the good results when to our astonishment we had also ground down the sharp teeth on the rasp. The old rasp is in the chest now, also broken. Every time I see it, I see those tell tale marks. It seems to say "that is what you did to me when you were boys." The old grindstone is still around. One day the boys (not me) put oil on it and as the stone absorbed it, it made pretty colors, rainbow like. Then Father came to use it, wanted to grind a sickle and when it would come to the oily spot it would slip. I guess nothing happened for we all hid. The old stone has been discarded long ago. I almost laughed when I came across it about a year ago. It was so small and the big square hole where the wood shaft went through was about the biggest part. It had been picked up and put in a crook of an apple tree. It had been there so long I had to take a pry to get it loose. I brought it to the house and now is used as a weight to keep meat under brine in a jar.

The extension bit perhaps bore the heaviest burden. It was tried time and time again and even put to more work when some of our school boys would come to see us. The blade on it was set so many times that the setting screw top today just shows a flat ragged surface. There is also hardly any threads left on the point of the bit. For a long time we were not allowed to handle it and were content with hammer and saw. Little by little we ventured out

and then began experimenting. Now I shake my head when I see the broken tools. How did Father ever stand it. Perhaps when he wanted a tool it was gone or misplaced, or was dull, or more often still was broken. How about the broken tools. We did not dare hide them, Father was stern on this. They were some times put back nicely and then the blame would fall on the next one that would handle it. I give my shoulder a little shake now for much of this blame fell to me. I handled the tools perhaps more than the others. It took nerve some times to hold my ground as I certainly broke my share. Some times there would be a feeling of satisfaction, I guess my Father knew. He was lenient. He knew what it was to be a boy and what a boy would do. He was stern on tools that were lost and broken, but we could use them. My brother one day lost the rat tail file, my memory is clouded on this. Perhaps he remembers what happened. Ask him.

The planes came next and how we admired the long curly shavings Father could make. The little smoothing plane we all claimed. There were planes that had many blades, planes that made beades and grooves. One had long wood screws and wood nuts, could be adjusted, but its mechanism was too wonderful for us. We could hardly use it till in later years. Then the long fore plane was too heavy to use. We could use the jack plane. I once made a jack plane out of apple wood and gave it to my brother who now has it and keeps it as a keep sake. We heard our Father tell of making one as a master piece to leave when he had finished his apprenticeship as a cabinet-maker.

The little circle saw did its share of sawing, it belonged to each and everyone who gave up claim as he outgrew it, but it saw trying days when it belonged to the one who got it first. It surely did its share of sawing in its day. In its constant use it kept getting shorter, I guess we all had a share in breaking off a piece. In an early day in the long narrow box were two pieces of chalk, for chalking the line. One was a blue piece and the other was of a different color and harder. Constant wear made them dwindle away. The old square with its many figures was a puzzle to us. Sometimes we would brighten it up and I

guess we must have tired Father by asking what they meant. It was too deep for us. Then came the old razor which had on it the Masonic signs and symbols. Father found it on the plains out west, so it had a place in the chest. My brother made a bone handle for it, replacing the old one that had been broken. He filed and ground the bone down and in all it was a fine piece of work. I have not seen it for years so it must be lost. Many of the other tools are also gone. The cross-cut saw is gone. The fine one was lost but found again, but badly rusted. The rip saw is broken and so are some of the augers. The chest's old padlock and key are gone. I suppose a hundred times or more we wondered how it was made and looked inside.

The old chest is in fairly good shape, the cover was broken but now patched. It happened one day when a big farm horse walked into the shed and the door being narrow could not get out again. In trying to turn around it put its fore feet on the chest and broke it in. I almost forgot the compass. It was tried and used perhaps more than any of the tools. We wanted to see how far it could spread its legs and how big a circle it could make. It made circles in circles, stars in stars and crescents in crescents. These are woven and interwoven together. I think there is one design inside the cover of the chest now. It gave us a world of past time. I guess we must have been little fellow craftsmen but did not know it. We did not even dream of the higher use and significance the compass had, or either the square and plumb bob. We did not know they had a place in the building of King Solomon's Temple. We too were building a temple but did not know it. How I wish I could reach out my arm and bring all in again. In my imagination I make the sweep. A world of memories are nestled there. In the litter and dust of the work shop were woven many golden memories. We were great builders, great builders. Our Father must have known then that which we knew not, but that which we know now.

Oh! we were builders great, builders great,
We built of stone and some of slate,

Our temple was high, our temple was wide,
Had walls as strong as the mountains side.

Our temple was great, our temple was great,
We had an outer wall but left an open gate,
Oh! we were builders great, builders great,
We built with love and not with hate.

A May Day On the Old Farm

I was again on Old Indian Hill doing my farm work, preparing the field for corn. So beautiful was the landscape with its stretches of green, the warm waving air nestling close to earth, the gentle roll with their soft folds that for a moment it charmed me. I almost forgot I was a man. I wanted to hop and skip over these little hills and vales and roll in the lap of great mother earth. I saw the long waving ridges made by the harrow. How responsive all of nature seemed. How promising the seed bed looked, soon I would see the dim outline of rows as the tiny germ would break through the crust, then soon a great sea of waving green, then in the fall time the more somber colors and the golden grain.

It was a glorious May afternoon and only softly faded away as the great orb closed the day, isle after isle of clouds came floating by and a gentle breeze stirred the clover leaves and ran like eddies across the green. I watched the passing shadows and saw the clovers nod in their play of hide and seek. The break of sunshine and shadows, the rippling wave on this sea of green entranced me. It was nature's great drama with a beautiful setting on earth and sky. Here for a moment childhood and manhood played upon me, perhaps as wonderful a blending as that beautiful May afternoon. I half murmured, saying, "Where do the clouds come from? Where does the cloud land lie?" I thot of a line in a poem by Trowbridge and said, "In the azure sky the argoses of cloud land lie." Then came our poet Riley and I saw the clover fields in full bloom, "knee deep in June." Then came a fuller moment, a blending and flooding of memories as I looked towards the fading sun and the old farm home. The old pasture was one mass of gold, studded like stars with dandelions. The old apple orchard almost hid the farm home, and was one bower of flowers. The stately maple trees that bordered the orchard

along the south lane stood like sentinels. Near the old farm I could see the tops of our stately elms. I could see old Daymon and Pythius and near them stood Noon Day and little Sheridan. Soon the beautiful day would be closed and I would be wending my way home. I had woven in with my work the glories of nature's great scenes and saw a beautiful setting. The curtains were drawn for me to look upon the more beautiful phases of life. This May Day had left a beautiful impress upon my store house of memories. Some day there will be a beautiful setting in the memories of long ago. I shall be glad to tell you then as I am now of that beautiful May Day on the old, old farm.

Our Old Seth Thomas Clock

When I was weaving the story of Little Round Top I said perhaps some day I would tell the story of our Old Seth Thomas clock. Now the day is here and I am going to recall the days of long ago when both of us were young. I have it before me now. It has been hidden away in an upstairs closet for a long time. It has passed its days of usefulness for it has never been wound since the main spring broke while I was winding it. As I look at it now before me, it is strangely silent and I feel like giving the pendulum a swing to hear that old familiar tick tock sound. Going back to the day it came to our home is almost past my recollection. Father bought it in Chicago in the early seventies. I hardly remember it in our home in town, or where I was born and where we live, but I remember as well as if it were today when Father packed it carefully in a box, carrying it to the station to bring to our home in the country. How eagerly I watched him, and asked him why he took the pendulum off. It seemed to me then a wonderful piece of work. The case was rather plain and built along colonial lines. Two long pillars resting on a base stood on both sides the door. I have seen but one other just like it in my day. There was a large square glass showing the face, below this was a paneled looking glass. I claimed this mine, also the clock box. How I planned to store my treasures in this when the clock wore out. There was a small round glass below the door and through it one could see the pendulum swing back and forth. The round glass stood out and in a raised frame of brass. This I also claimed and have often begged to clean and shine it to see it glisten. This would also give me a good excuse to look at the works and wheels inside. We were strictly forbidden to touch or meddle with it, but in this a great feeling of kindness goes out to my Father, for I have seen him hold the boys many times on his arm, or

perched upon his shoulders to have them wind the clock. It was always wound after supper. As good as he was to us, there still was a longing and our curiosity was not satisfied. We have meddled with it when the folks were away. How carefully we would open the door and peer under the face to see the wheels and watch them move, see the two large springs, see the jaws that would catch and slip and make that tick tock sound. I have opened it now just to see how the inside looks. It all seems so familiar. There is the bell, and the vibrating spring and the clapper. Off to one side was the alarm part. This we would never miss to wind and what a noise it would make. It must have been an amusing sight. The older ones experimenting and the younger ones just as eager to hear the alarm go off, but cautioned not to tell. We could make it strike by pushing up on a small wire and how alarmed we were when we could not stop it. I see on the back of the looking glass are some addresses of friends and relatives gone and forgotten. I looked down in the bottom, here is where Father kept some old papers. I remember a gilt edge card he had in there and on it was the name of his major, C. F. Curtis, of Company C, 2nd. California Infantry, only a few trinkets are in it now. I reached down for the old brass key and wound it. I took Father's place, and it seemed natural, I gave the pendulum a swing and it gave the old familiar tick. The enamel on the face is off in places and the point of the minute hand is broken, but on it now is one I made from tin, shaping it like the old one. It has the Roman figures on the dial and in the center is also a small round dial with the Roman figures. This was for setting the alarm. Here as boys we learned to tell the time of day, to count the hours and minutes from one point to another, and as we got along at school, the old clock would help us out on some of our problems in Ray's higher arithmetic. I have almost forgotten them now, but some would be like this: The hour and minute hands are together at 12 o'clock; when are they next together. Many other like this. There was reading inside telling how to wind and set it, and that it was made by Seth Thomas, of Connecticut, and warranted good. What a store house of memories are

woven around that old clock. It is no wonder that we learned the figures and learned to count and add, tell the hours and minutes, tell the time of day. How often Father told us what A. M. and P. M. meant. He was a sailor and told us about the meridians. As I think of it now, in an early day it was the only ornament on the wall of our home. Besides it there was a heavy plate looking glass. Father brought this back when he returned from the Union Pacific R. R. It is no wonder we were eager to see the clock go, for we had no toys and yet our Father was good. He made us our kites and squirt guns, and the long promised wagon he never made because the piece to make the wheels from was braced against the cellar wall, and could not be taken away. I remember well the old clock's place in the kitchen and the shelf it stood on. In later years when the house was remodeled the shelf was torn down. How well it was made. Father made it when he built the house, by trade he was a cabinet maker. As I took the clock today from its hiding place, I found on the top a small school boys box, made by one of my brothers out of a cigar box. It was well made and varnished over. The cover was broken, in it was a slate pencil, a lead pencil, a jumping jack with hands broken and a little map of Illinois cut the shape of the state, out of card board. I looked to see if there was anything in the place where we boys would some times hide our treasures. This was underneath the top and from the back, but it was empty. When I think of what the clock meant to us boys, the only ornament of our home in our boyhood days, it is no wonder the memories woven around the old Seth Thomas clock are dear to me.

Now I must close. I have told the story of our old
Seth Thomas Clock,
How it stood on a shelf, and in a lonely way said
tick tock.
How each night it was wound to make the hands go
round,
How as boys we wondered what made that tick tock
sound,
How we mimicked the old clock with jingle and
rhyme,

Would taunt it by saying, too-fast-too-slow and never on time.

I have put the clock away, back to its old hiding place and with it the little school boy's box. Today I saw myself a little boy again walking hand in hand with Father while he was carrying the clock. The faithful old clock brought back many boyhood memories. I carefully put back the broken cover of the school boy's pencil box and said: "Old clock you may have your treasures too."

My Old Canoe and Sacred Center

I must tell you the story of my old canoe. It was many years ago that I spied this little canoe under our old corn crib. Who made it or put it there is forgotten history to me. Father built the crib many years ago, or more than fifty years ago, and I think he cut the canoe from a log he got in the Five Mile Grove. It was only about four feet long and eight or ten inches deep. Why it was under the crib or that the outside sill should be resting on it I can not tell. Many and many are the times I have looked at it, wishing it could be taken away, but so important did it seem to me that I never thot I dare dig it out for fear the building would settle at that place. As I am writing this story many of the old longings come vividly to me. How I longed to see it sail and planned to rig it and put it on the pond just north of this crib. I have gone from my little canoe to this pond time and time again making my plans, and how I longed to see it sail and ride those waters, but it was all make believe, for the old canoe rested safely under the crib and never knew a storm or calm.

Old Sacred Center had its place in this story and filled my boyhood days with other sport without my canoe. With my other brothers we would wade and swim in it, or make stones skip, or have our old dog Shep wade in for sticks. How we would scare the frogs, crawfish and polly wogs, or the wild ducks, geese and cranes. In the early days near the edge were beds of rushes and beds of water lilies. One day I remember wading in to look at a black bird's nest, and before reaching it the young birds took fright and as they were unable to fly fell in the water, how well I remember one little bird came swimming towards me, how carefully I put them back again.

In later years one of my brothers while away at college was given the task to write a short story. He wrote about this old pond and gave it the name of Sacred Center.

It has held this name ever since, but now it has been drained and has been in pasture for many years. Not even a trace of the old muskrat dens are seen, but as it was so closely linked to my old canoe I have woven its story too. It was a great pastime, both in summer and winter, our swimming, our skating, our merry-go, or whirl-i-gig, as we would call it. When it dried in the fall time, how eager we were to catch the bull head cat-fish and sun-fish, but now to finish the story of my old canoe.

It fell to my lot when the old crib was torn down many years later to dig the canoe out from its long resting place. I was grown up then, but I handled it carefully, saw how it was made, memories were too dear to pass it by, but it crumbled and fell to pieces. I wondered then and even wonder now did Father make it, cut and shaped it? Some how my knowing seems to say, "Father made it." He so often told us about the Indian canoe. He had seen boats of all kinds, had sailed the many seas, and often he showed us the picture of a sail boat in one of Mark Twain's books. It was one of the three books in our home in an early day. This boat was in full sail and a full moon shining thru the fleecy clouds. As he told us about this we would be with him as real as could be. The same brother that named the pond Sacred Center was given the book as a keep sake. I remember one Fourth of July a gladness came to me, I made a small boat, rigged it with sails, and on the center mast put an American flag, and placed it on the glassy waters of Sacred Center. I heard some children exclaim as they were passing by on the highway going to the village celebration, "See the boat, the boat." These were the same words I used when I first saw a real boat on a river in Chicago. I was a little over three then, but I remember saying to Father, "A boat, a boat." When I think of my memories and of my Father's memories I think he made my little canoe. Now, I have told my story to you, the story of my old canoe.

Closing Recollections

It was the Public Sale at the old farm home (Dec. 23, 1919.) that in a way closes the story that had its beginning in the long ago. The long stretches of years, over half a century, have had their fruition. This closing day may not have been seen in that far away dream when father first stood on Little Round Top and viewed the great open prairie before him, there on a spring day drinking in life's young dreams, planning of a home and looking forward to the rearing of a family. Recalling these past memories brings out a wondrous story, this story, like the Epic of old, lingers long and like the strain of music flowing from golden harps makes many years seem to me like a few days in an enchanted land.

That pristine day, that spring day when nature, reigning in saintly glory, gave golden promises to man's unfoldment. Words and language fail me here to open this beautiful vista. Here father stood on Little Round Top, before him lay the virgin soil to conquer for him and his. You and I saw the play staged and life's great drama played. You and I were with him on that long journey, saw him linger and rest at the way-side. Here was mother too, true and brave, willing, always cheerful and courageous, toiling in the home and sometimes in the field. We saw her go to rest in almost early womanhood. We were all lulled to slumber by her cooing song. We heard a mother's sweet, low lul-a-by, no song was ever sweeter, no nothing in all this wide, wide world could have made our slumber deeper, nothing could have made our manhood stronger more than the impress of a mother's love.

We saw the passing of the wild. We heard the wild animal's call grow fainter. We saw the Indian trails, the old wagon roads, the hunters, the herders, the deer and cow paths give way to the breaking plow, even the wild prairie flower yielded to the coming of this strange me'o-drama. It was the busy pioneer toilers that set music to their silent requiem.

I came over Little Round Top in the early morning of the sale day, for a moment I stood silent and alone in the still, frosty morning air, while painter and sculptor brought forth their rich offerings. The realization of that early dream and what the past had been was a full and just reward for a life filled with love and labor.

As I stood there, days and fleeting years were crowding upon me. I saw the great change that had taken

place in the fields and home. I thought of the many days and years of toil. I thought of the wondrous changes that the diligent hands had made, the horizon had been widened as other fields had been added. I had a full share in these priceless, golden days, much had been given to my care and keeping. I had been chosen custodian of the Old Farm Home, strange, passing strange it seemed to me as here I stood where father once stood, only I am in a way closing the story. This story, like the other memory stories were written for you and the grand-children.

For a moment the surrounding stillness charmed me. A strange feeling came over me. The old home was deserted, there came a deep longing for boyhood happy days, I again wanted to hear the ringing shouts and hearty laughter. Here I had once raced as a boy over Round Top, here time and again I had sounded Echo Glen, I remember the gladness that came to me in finding my first romanites in the orchard. I would like to linger here recalling early memories, but that would make a long, long story.

I knew there would soon be gathered a motly crowd coming from near and far and in the large tent would soon be heard the ringing cry, "going, going, the third and last call, all in, all done, sold."

I had given the faithful horses the parting word the morning before, the many strange incidents that had happened in my caring for them and other farm animals would be almost an endless story. I saw every phase of life, had every chord touched, I could tell story after story of wondrous understanding and strong individual traits and tell of many beautiful closing scenes, so strange were some told, yet in feeling so plain one could not help but understand. It was a wondrous phase of life, enriching one almost daily. I could recall many a memory of love and service.

I wish that my children could have lived some of those years we had, that they might know, that they might feel and understand. The few years they had will be but a faint memory. I hear them now and then saying, "Our-O'd-Farm-Home."

In this I did not want to tell of our early struggle, our hardships, our disappointments. I have a knowing that some-how and some-where there is a tie and kinship almost unexplainable. I find that in recalling past memories and thru the many beautiful phases that can come to one we have an endless theme. I close with deep regrets and love.

In Conclusion

This is not the ending of that long, long story told around the old kitchen stove, for in my store house there are many others and I could go on till the fires burned low. I have not even given my imagination full play, I have not even tried to weave in them all that I have lived and felt, for the deep stirring of my inward nature has realized much.

I even wonder now as I look back to those play days, then the field in which we toiled and labored, days in which we were tried and tested and our principle and conduct weighed.

I have tried to tell the story to you so you could realize it in the same feeling of gratefulness as I have, it has been a great source of comfort and encouragement to me, in days when the load was heavy and the pathway dark, to be again and again reminded of those who were our tower of strength and inspiration.

We now know that we passed thru days of helpfulness and those that gave us care and watching and tender love have gone on their long, long journey; they left for us a home, rich in song and story; their memory we revere, their personage we idolize, they knew then that which we knew not, but that which we know now.

I close with regrets for my store house is still overflowing, the few that I have woven for you is the fruitage of a mind of one who has lived and love

Affectionately yours,

H. J. MIES.